

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A methods for preparing an authenticable and verifiable image of a software
5 module by adding to the received software module image a size and location block, an
authentication block including a cryptographically protected module-specific public key and a
clear-text version of the module-specific public key, and a verification block that includes a
digital signature prepared from the module image. In one particular embodiment of the
present invention, a next firmware-module that is to be accessed during a secure boot process
10 is created to include a module-specific public key, a hashed and encrypted version of the
module-specific public key, and a digital signature of the firmware-module image prepared
using a module-specific private key.